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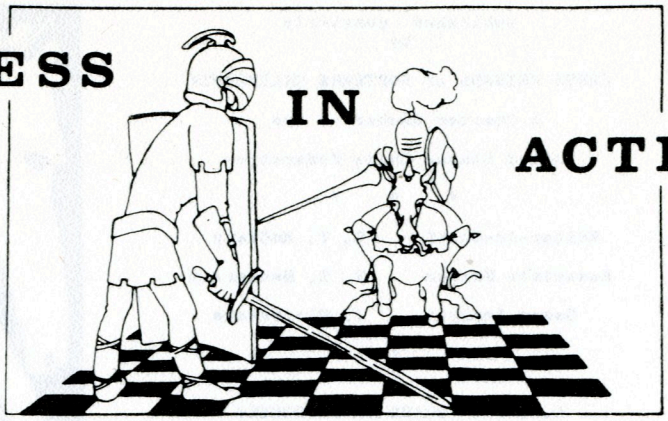

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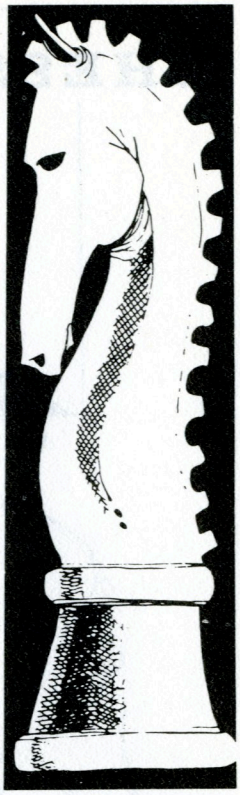

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KERES' CORNER by International Grandmaster PAUL KERES

Comments on the 1965 Candidates' Match Series (Part I)

The competitions for the world title have always aroused great interest in the chess world, and the 1964-1966 Candidates' Match Series is no exception. The Interzonals in Amsterdam (1964) and the subsequent matches between eight grandmasters this year were chess events of greatest international importance. At the moment these words are written, all matches up to the Tal-Larsen semi-finals and the finals themselves have been completed.

The eight original contestants were drawn into two groups, resulting in the following pairings: (1) Spassky-Keres and Geller-Smyslov, with the two winners of these sets to meet in the semi-finals, and (2) Tal-Portisch and Larsen-Ivkov, winners of these two matches also meeting in the semi-finals. The winners of the two groups will meet again in the finals, to determine the official FIDE Match Challenger against World Champion TIGRAN PETROSIAN. The title match will be held sometime in 1966.

All the quarter-final and semi-final matches will be of ten games, with the finals consisting of twelve. The ultimate winner of these contests must be determined during the autumn of 1965.

SPASSKY vs. KERES

The earliest quarter-final match to be played was the encounter between BORIS SPASSKY and PAUL KERES, during the month of April. The games were played at Riga, Latvia, with Spassky scoring a fine 6-4 win. It is probably easiest for me (as one of the participants) to explain the factors that led to Spassky's victory.

Many readers may recall that this match was not decided until the tenth game. Being down by a 5-4 score, I was compelled to play this final game in a decidedly risky fashion. After missing a solid line which would have given me a reasonable position with an extra Pawn, I lost the correct continuation and with it, game and match. Until then, the fight had been extremely tense. Spassky played the first game too optimistically and lost, then drew the second game. After this "modest" beginning, he scored three consecutive wins. Leading at the half-way point by a 3½-1½ score, Spassky needed only two of the remaining five possible points to win the match, and most of the experts decided that the fight was already over. Possibly Spassky was of the same opinion, as in the second half of the match he seemed to lack the determination that gave him success in the first five games. After losing the eighth game, and missing a simple winning line in the ninth, he had to give his best in the tenth and final bout in order to assure his match victory.

Comparing all the matches completed at this point, I am of the opinion that Spassky, of all the contestants, has displayed the best chess in this series. His play is extraordinarily safe, he does not make obvious mistakes and he is most exact in exploiting errors made by his opponents. His weakest points are nervousness in critical positions and somewhat undecided play in positions where he holds a clear advantage. However, since he is still a young man, I am personally confident that he will overcome these disadvantages in the future.

As loser, I may find (of course) a dozen reasons for the result of this set of games, but the main one was that Spassky simply played better chess than I did. I lacked the necessary freshness of ideas, and was often in time trouble. Worse, I made too many outright mistakes. Moves like 25.R-Q3? in Game Two, and 27.Q-Q1? in Game Four are inexcusable. However, the most curious thing happened to me in the fifth game.

After the well-known opening moves (Spassky playing the white pieces) 1.P-K4, P-K4; 2.N-KB3, N-QB3; 3.B-N5, P-QR3; 4.B-R4, N-B3; 5.0-0, B-K2; 6.R-K1, P-QN4; 7.B-N3, P-Q3; 8.P-B3, 0-0; 9.P-KR3, N-QR4; 10.B-B2, P-B4; 11.P-Q4, Q-B2; 12.N/1-Q2, B-Q2; 13.N-B1, BPxP; 14.PxP, QR-B1; 15.N-K3, KR-K1; 16.P-QN3, I made a most curious miscalculation. When proceeding 16..,PxP; 17.NxP, B-B1; I could not see how White could comfortably defend his K-Pawn, and was very much surprised when (without longer consideration) Spassky replied 18.B-N2. How could he make this sacrifice? When I determined upon the move 16..,PxP; I considered this reply by White to be impossible because of 18..,NxP; 19.N-Q5, QxB; and only now did I see that the Bishop (at B2) remained protected by the other Knight! Therefore, the "anti-positional" move 16..,PxP? lost in every sense, and I lost the game.

The last game of this match was certainly the most interesting of the ten. I believe the following short notes will help the reader to understand the various happenings in this extremely nervous encounter.

Paul Keres — KING'S INDIAN DEFENSE — Boris Spassky

1.	P-Q4	N-KB3
2.	P-QB4	P-KN3
3.	N-QB3	B-N2
4.	P-K4	P-Q3
5.	P-B4	....

Needing only a draw to assure winning the match, Spassky chooses the risky King's Indian Defense, a tactic I cannot approve, despite his success here.

White needs no less than a win in order to draw the match. Therefore, he heads for the greatest complications.

5. .... P-B4
6. P-Q5 0-0
7. N-B3 P-K3
8. B-K2 PxP
9. BPxP P-QN4
10. P-K5 PxP
11. PxP N-N5
12. B-KB4! ....

This is a new move that I had considered briefly during home analysis, but did not complete the work -- and here good preparation was so vital! In previous games, 12.B-N5 or 12.BxP were tried, but without great success.

12. .... N-Q2
13. P-K6 PxP
14. BxP RxB

Certainly the relatively best reply.

15. Q-Q5! ....

This was the position I had in mind. I had concluded my home analysis at this point, judging the position to be favorable for White, and I still believe in the accuracy of my judgment in this instance.

15. .... K-R1!

Spassky keeps his head and finds --- over the board --- the best defensive chance.

16. QxR ....

Still to be "proven out" is 16.0-0-0.

16. .... N-N3
17. QxRP ....

After losing his game, a player is often criticized too severely. Many experts have declared this capture to be "the decisive mistake," and recommended instead 17.Q-N8. I had considered that move during the game, of course, but rejected it for these two reasons: 1) 17..,RxN; followed by 18. B-K4; might give Black sufficient counter-attacking possibilities for a draw, and 2) 17..,N-K6; is most annoying for White, as 18.K-B2 is met by 18..,B-K4; or even 18..,N-N5/. In my opinion, the text move is the only way for White to play for a win.

17. .... BxP
18. 0-0 N-K6

The critical position. I was quite willing to return the "exchange" for an active position, but 19.QR-Q1, NxQR; 20.RxN would not be suitable for this purpose, due to Black's strong continuation 20..,B-Q5/! I also considered the line 19.BxP! NxR; 20.BxN, but feared that my extra Pawn would not be sufficient for a win in a position where the Black pieces would develop great activity (and I HAD to win!). Correct, of course, was 19.BxP.

19. R-B2? P-N5
20. N-QN5 ....

Forced. After 20.N-Q1, there would follow 20..,N-N5; 21.R/2-B1, B-Q5/! (much too strong for White's taste, i.e., 22.NxB, QxN/; 23.K-R1, RxR/; 24.BxR, Q-KB5; or 22.K-R1, Q-Q6! with many threats). But now two of White's pieces are out of play, and Black develops a very dangerous attack.

20. .... R-B2
21. Q-R5 Q-N1!

Very strong. Black now threatens to play 22..,N-N5; etc.

22. R-K1 B-Q4!

But not 22..,N-N5; 23.B-B1! etc. White is in a very difficult situation, and is extremely short of time.

23. B-B1 NxB
24. R/2xN N-B5
25. Q-R6 R-B3
26. Q-R4 NxP!

Here I was calculating the variation 26..,B-B3; 27.Q-R7, QxN; 28.R-K7, B-B1; 29.RxP/, K-N1; but could find no continuation for my attack, when Spassky made the text move, which I was not expecting. Having very little time left, I found 27.Q-R5, N-B5; 28.Q-R4? B-B3; etc., completely overlooking 28.Q-B7! (e.g., 28..,QxN; 29. Q-Q8/, B-N1; 30.R-K8, etc.). Also, 27..,B-B5; 28.N-B7 was not decisive. In any case, Black's position is at least good enough for equality, which would mean the win of the match for for Spassky.

27. Q-B2? QxN

And Black wins easily, as White cannot reply 28.QxN, because of 28..,RxN! A most dramatic battle!

GELLER vs. SMYSLOV

The two opponents in this match have both had many splendid successes during their respective careers. They had also met each other in a couple of games with approximately even scores, and they both had shown good results in their most recent appearances in international chess events. The majority of the experts expected an interesting and approximately even battle, slightly favoring Smyslov, however, as being the more experienced match player.

The actual contest showed a surprising result. From the very beginning, Geller won every game when playing the white pieces, then plunged ahead by 4-1 at the end of the fifth game, and the battle was practically over. The last three games resulted in routine draws, which fixed Geller's victory at 5½-2½.

What was the reason for Smyslov's devastating defeat? It is, of course, not easy to find an explanation. I am inclined to think that psychologically, Smyslov

in fact lost the fight before it ever started. He had prepared to play his first match in this series against MIKHAIL BOTVINNIK. When it was learned that Botvinnik would not be participating in the matches, and Smyslov was therefore assigned a new opponent (Geller) shortly before the beginning of play, he could not change his strategic attitude towards the various new problems quickly enough. In my opinion, FIDE did not act properly here by failing to postpone this match to allow Smyslov the necessary preparation. There was absolutely no hurry to finish it in June as it did.

I have the impression that Smyslov did not show his usual fighting spirit in this match, or his famous technique and usually firm play. We are not accustomed to see him losing such endings as in Game One, being overrun by an attack as in Game Five. Nor are we used to seeing him make mistakes like 21..,P-Q4? in Game Three or 14.P-QN4? in Game Four. One also feels that Smyslov was not well enough prepared in the openings, as he always had some trouble with the black pieces and could achieve nothing essential when playing the white. In addition, Smyslov does not care much for such short (in number of games) matches.

Geller, on the contrary, displayed himself in splendid form. He played aggressively, conducted his attacks with great skill and was able to lead the games into positions that he liked. Where he appeared most obviously better than his opponent was in opening preparation. We see him obtaining advantageous opening positions in Games Three and Five, and in the remaining rounds he never got into trouble during the opening. Geller achieved a splendid victory in this match. However, I feel confident that Smyslov will re-attain his normal strength in forthcoming tournaments.

The fifth game was the most interesting struggle of this match:

Ewfim Geller — GRUNFELD DEFENSE — Vassily Smyslov

1. P-Q4 N-KB3
2. P-QB4 P-KN3
3. N-QB3 P-Q4
4. PxP ....

This old line is growing more and more popular in recent tournaments.

4. .... NxP
5. P-K4 NxN
6. PxN B-N2
7. B-QB4 P-QB4
8. N-K2 0-0
9. 0-0 N-B3
10. B-K3 Q-B2

This is Smyslov's favorite line in this position.

11. QR-B1 R-Q1
12. P-B4 P-K3
13. K-R1 P-N3?

Black should not have permitted P-B5, after which White obtains an overwhelming attack. Better was 13..,N-R4; 14.B-Q3, P-B4! a manouver which brought him success in a game against Svetozar Gligoric in 1959.

14. P-B5! ....

From here on, Geller conducts the attack with great skill. He very much likes this sort of position!

14. .... N-R4

If 14..,KPxP; 15.B-KN5, R-B1; 16.N-N3 is very strong.

15. B-Q3 KPxP
16. PxP B-N2
17. Q-Q2 R-K1
18. N-N3 Q-B3

The Queen is misplaced here. Better was 18..,QR-B1; with the idea of easing his position through exchanges.

19. KR-B2 QR-Q1

The combination 19..,RxB; 20.QxR, PxQP; 21.PxQP, BxP; 22.Q-Q2, QxR/; 23.QxQ, BxR; is strongly met by 24.Q-R6!

20. B-R6 B-R1
21. Q-B4 R-Q2
22. N-K4! ....

Very strong. Black cannot capture, e.g., 22..,RxN; 23.BxR, QxB; because of 24.Q-N8/, etc.

22. .... P-B5

Only making the defense more difficult.

23. B-B2 R/2-K2
24. R/1-B1! RxN
25. PxP! ....

With the idea 25..,RxQ? 27.PxP Mate.

25. .... P-B3
26. Q-N5! ....

These Queen-sacrifice offers are for the spectators. Black's position is absolutely hopeless.

26. .... Q-Q2
27. K-N1 ....

It is rather difficult to find a move for White which does NOT win!

27. .... B-N2
28. RxP R-N5

Equally hopeless was 28..,BxR; 29.QxB, RxP; 30.QxP/, K-R1; 31.B-N5, etc.

29. PxP/ K-R1
30. BxB/ QxB
31. QxR BLACK RESIGNS.

E.g., 31..,QxQ; 32.R-B8/ forces Mate. One does not see games of this sort every day between grandmasters.

TAL vs. PORTISCH

This quarter-final match also ended with a 5½-2½ score, with Tal as the clear winner. However, this fight had quite another character from the preceding two. Before the match, many commentators were quite uncertain about the outcome. They argued that Portisch was an extremely firm player, with a very good knowledge of the openings and excellent end-game technique. This type of player is usually difficult for a combinative player like Tal to handle. After six games, Tal led by only one point, 3½-2½. After that, Portisch appeared to have abandoned the match entirely, losing the next two games with play far below his normal strength. What could have been the reason for this drastic collapse? It seems to me that the weakest point in Portisch' play is tactics. I have seen games where he became quite uncertain in tactical complications, and began to play much below his usual standard. It also seems that Tal is aware of this characteristic of Portisch play. We see in the games where Tal played the white pieces, some "typical Tal" sacrifices, most of which are not approved by the experts, but which bring joy to the hearts of the spectators and which also (most important!) gain him valuable points. This tactical instability of Tal's seems to have impressed Portisch' style, making him more uncertain and shaking his calmness.

What about Tal's play? We all know Tal well enough to make comments about his style. He played this match well, in his usual style -- risky -- with an abundance of interesting ideas.

From the games in this match I choose not the best, but the most characteristic one. I consider that to be the second game of the match, where Tal succeeds in bringing off one of his typically surprising sacrifices:

Mikhail Tal — CARO-KANN DEFENSE — Lajos Portisch

1. P-K4 P-QB3
2. N-QB3 P-Q4
3. N-B3 PxP
4. NxP B-KN5
5. P-KR3 BxN
6. QxB N-Q2
7. P-Q4 N/1-B3
8. B-Q3 NxN
9. QxN P-K3
10. 0-0 B-K2

The first game of the match ended in a draw, and here Portisch clearly is aiming at a similar result with the Black pieces. It is interesting to follow Tal's handling of this attempt.

11. P-QB3 N-B3
12. Q-R4 N-Q4

12..,0-0; or 12..,Q-Q4; would have been simpler, in order to avoid complications.

13. Q-N4 B-B3
14. R-K1 Q-N3

With the obvious intention ..,0-0-0. Tal now finds it to be the correct time for creating wild complications.

15. P-QB4 N-N5
16. RxP/!? ....

There are very few masters who would have decided here to make such a surprising sacrifice. It does not give White anything, really, but the psychological shock is devastating!

16. .... PxR
17. QxP/ K-B1

Now Portisch is playing for a win. Objectively this is fully correct, but (psychologically) Tal has a decisive advantage here. After 17.., K-Q1; White is practically forced to draw by 18.Q-Q6/, etc. 17..,B-K2 is risky, because of 18.B-N6/, PxB; 19.B-N5, Q-B2; 20.R-K1, etc.

18. B-B4 R-Q1
19. P-B5 NxB!

The simplest. Black gets sufficient material in exchange for his Queen.

20. PxQ ....

If 20.B-R6, then Black can play 20.., Q-B2; 21.QxB/, K-N1; 22.BxP, R-K1! and after 23.BxR, R-B1; and White remains a piece down.

20. .... NxB
21. Q-N4 N-Q4
22. PxP ....

Now we may summarize the results of Tal's sacrifice. Black has a Rook, Bishop and Knight in exchange for a Queen and three Pawns. His pieces are well posted, and White's Pawn at R7 is not especially dangerous. Had Portisch considered the situation calmly, he certainly would have seen that after 22..,P-KN3; followed by 23..,K-N2; White has not sufficient force to freshen his attack, and that Black's material advantage should give the second player better prospects. But Portisch is still overwhelmed by Tal's combination.

22. .... K-K2

The Black King is committing suicide.

23. P-N4 R-R1
24. R-K1/ K-Q3
25. P-N5 RxP?

And here is the long-awaited blunder.

26. R-K6/ K-B2
27. RxB! BLACK RESIGNS.

Black loses an entire piece. Another case of "Tal hypnosis" perhaps?

LARSEN vs. IVKOV

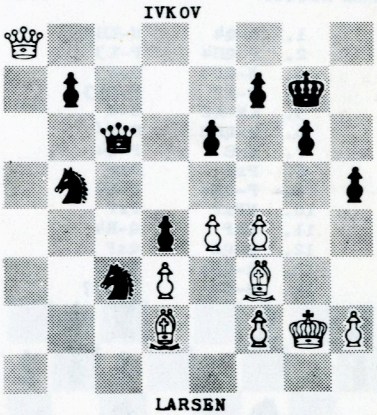
The final score $5\frac{1}{2}$-$2\frac{1}{2}$ seemed to be quite popular in these qualification sets. Such a score in this match, however, was quite surprising, as nearly everyone was of the opinion that they were going to see a very hard and even fight. The experts were aware of the fact that Ivkov was the more solid player, with a good positional foundation and he was in excellent physical condition. Shortly before this match, both players participated in the big Zagreb International Tournament, where Ivkov showed splendid form in tying for first place with Grandmaster Uhlmann. Everyone thought that Ivkov's good form would continue during this match and that therefore his chances were somewhat preferable to Larsen's. Such an opinion was expressed just before the match by no less than present World Champion Petrosian.

Larsen, on the other hand, was generally considered a "dark horse." The chess world recalled his big success at the Interzonal in Amsterdam, 1964, when he tied for first and second places, thereby securing for himself the right to participate in these very matches. But everybody also remembered the very unsteady play that he showed in Zagreb, where he lost all his games against the first five players! The general opinion of Larsen is that he is a very talented but very unsteady player. For this reason, Ivkov was slightly favored to win this match.

In the match itself, however, the practice refuted the predictions. Again it was the tactical aspect of the game which decided things in Larsen's favor. Ivkov, we know, is better in the openings and in end-game technique, but tactician Larsen won the games. He cleverly used the fact that Ivkov does not like unclear positions, and that he usually thinks long, often getting into time trouble. As a result, Larsen (the optimist who predicted his win to newspapermen before the match) gained an overwhelming victory.

Actually, the play in the match was closer than the final score indicates. In the first game, Ivkov had a winning position, but adjourned in a lost position. When play resumed after the adjournment, he again had an easy win, but lost due to time trouble. After a quiet draw in Game Two, Ivkov adjourned the third game with a lost end-game, but managed to draw it when play resumed. In the fourth game (and playing the white pieces), he got nothing from the opening and should have agreed to a draw. However, he suddenly left a piece en prise, and therefore resigned.

In general, the games in this match were quite lively, and the advantage usually changed hands many times during the games. The best illustration of this comes from the first game of the match, which we offer below, commencing with the position after White's 37th move:



Black's position here is won, but he must still solve some technical problems. However, Ivkov (who was in great time trouble) wants to force matters, and this is what happened: 37..,Q-R3; 38.Q-Q8, Q-R7; 39.B-K1, Q-N8. Here Black thought he was going to win material, but he quite forgets that he, also, has a King! 40.P-B5! and suddenly Black realizes 40..,QxB is not possible because of 41.P-B6/, K-R2; 42.Q-KB8, with Mate to follow --- but it is already too late. 40..,KPxP. Here the game was adjourned, with everyone expecting a quick win for Larsen when play was resumed, but things happened quite differently: 41.PxP, PxP; 42.B-Q2, QxP; 43.B-B4? A surprise for Ivkov, but a pleasant one. He had expected 43. B-R6/! KxB; 44.Q-R8/, K-N3; 45.P-R4, and Black would be forced to give up his Queen. But the adventures continue, e.g., 43..,N-K5; 44.B-K5/, P-B3; 45.Q-K7/, K-N1; 46.B-B4, Q-B7! Black has defended himself adequately, and the best thing for White now would be to agree on a draw, even though he held an easily won position at adjournment. The game continued: 47.Q-Q8/, K-N2; 48.Q-Q7/, K-N1; 49.B-N3, N/4-Q3; 50.Q-Q8/, K-N2; 51.Q-Q7/, K-N1; 52.Q-Q8/, K-N2; 53.B-R4, N-B2; 54.Q-Q7, Q-B3? (a grave mistake in time trouble. Black could have had some winning chances with 54..,Q-B4!) 55.QxBP, N/2-Q3; 56.BxP/! (a possibility that Ivkov apparently overlooked. Now he cannot capture 56..,NxB; because of 57.Q-N5/, and otherwise his position soon becomes hopeless) 56..,K-B1; 57.Q-B4, Q-Q4; 58.Q-R6/, K-K1; 59.Q-N7, N-B2 (or 59..,Q-B2; 60.BxP! etc.); 60.Q-N6, and Black resigned, as he must lose the Knight at K4.

With this remarkable illustration, we leave the Candidates' Quarter-Finals. They produced many interesting encounters, a lot of hard fighting, but in general, not as good chess as one would expect from the world's leading grandmasters. It seems that such short matches are not the best method to bring the best players together, especially bearing in mind that a 5-5 match result, followed by two more draws, would cause the winner to be decided by the toss of a coin!

Comments on the 1965 Candidates' Match Series (Part 2)

The four grandmasters who reached the semi-finals of the Candidates' Match Series all displayed excellent form in their quarter-final sets. Three of them Geller, Larsen and Tal) gained overwhelming 5½-2½ victories over their opponents, while Spassky scored a 6-4 win against Keres.

It is easy to understand that the chess world showed great interest in these semi-final matches (Spassky vs. Geller, and Tal vs. Larsen). Unfortunately, the only one of the contests showed genuine fight and that was the encounter between Tal and Larsen. In the other match, Geller was clearly outplayed by Spassky, losing by the now popular 5½-2½ margin. Let us briefly analyze these two struggles:

SPASSKY vs. GELLER

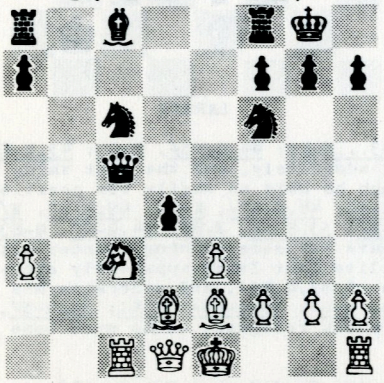
After Geller's fine win over Smyslov in the quarter-finals, the general opinion was that there would be a hard fight between Geller and Spassky, but the final score shows a clear superiority for the latter. What was the reason behind Geller's big defeat?

I think the answer is quite simple. In this match, Spassky played the better chess. After somewhat uncertain play in the early games (where Geller could have taken the lead), Spassky recovered his near-errorless style, and gave his opponent no chances at all. There was still some fight in the first five games when Spassky led by only one point, but Game Six brought the turning point in the match. In a beautiful sacrificial game, Spassky gained an important victory. At this point, the battle was decided, psychologically. There was only the question of time before Spassky had scored the necessary 5½ points for the match win.

In the early games, Spassky was not quite certain and permitted his opponent some tactical possibilities, but in the second half of the match he played with great accuracy, leaving Geller virtually without chances. His opponent, on the other hand, made some doubtful opening experiments (like playing the "Marshall Attack" in Game Two) but did not display his usual tactical skill. But one cannot beat Spassky with "second-best" moves! The decisive stroke to Geller's hopes was his terrible loss in Game Six, and with this stroke the match was practically over. Game One produced some interesting moments. We present it here with brief notes:

Ewfim Geller — NIMZO-INDIAN DEFENSE — Boris Spassky

1.	P-Q4	N-KB3
2.	P-QB4	P-K3
3.	N-QB3	B-N5
4.	P-K3	P-QN3
5.	KN-K2	0-0
6.	P-QR3	BxN/
7.	NxB	P-Q4
8.	PxP	PxP
9.	P-QN4	P-B4
10.	NPxP	PxP
11.	PxP	Q-R4
12.	B-Q2	QxP
13.	R-QB1	N-B3
14.	B-K2	P-Q5?



Spassky's last move was too optimistic. He thinks that after 15.N-K4, Q-K2; 16.NxN/, QxN; 17.RxN! QxR; 18. B-KB3, he would obtain good attacking chances for his piece. But how? If, for instance, 18..,Q-B5; 19.BxR, B-B4; then 20.Q-B3 is good enough to secure White's advantage. However, Geller takes his opponent's decision at face value, and fails to find the correct reply, e.g., 15.N-K4! Instead, he continued:

15.	N-N5	Q-N3
16.	0-0	R-Q1
17.	Q-B2	....

17.B-KB3! would have given White good chances to obtain a clear advantage, but Geller even missed that one.

17.	....	B-N2
18.	R-N1	PxP
19.	BxP	Q-R4
20.	N-Q6	....

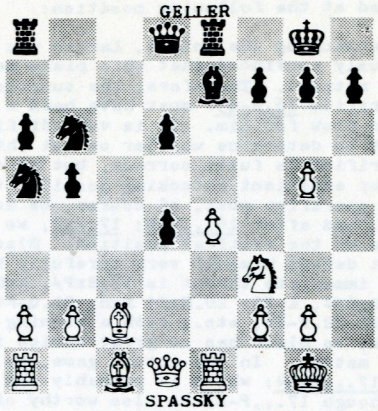
Better was 20.KR-Q1.

20.	....	RxN
21.	RxB	N-Q5

And the game was soon drawn.

Games Two and Three passed in equal contest, although Geller's risky opening line in Game Two (the Marshall Attack) was clearly refuted. Then came the crucial sixth game, which turned out to be the decisive struggle in this match. A rather quiet opening (in the Ruy Lopez) did not promise a fierce battle at all. However, Geller made a minor mistake and Spassky built up a threatening attacking position. After Geller's 18th move, the following position arose:

Geller probably thought that now White must continue 19.QxP, after which 19.., N-B3 and 20..,N-K4 would lead to an acceptable position for Black. Instead, Spassky started a strong attack with 19.P-K5! Now, 19..,PxP; 20.NxP would have been the best for Black, but Geller tried 19..,B-B1? Spassky, of course, did not miss his chance here, and continued 20.BxP/!! KxB; 21.P-N6/! This leads to an overwhelming attack. Black cannot answer 21..,KxP because of 22. Q-Q3/, P-B4; 23.PxP e.p./, etc., and 21..,PxP; 22.N-N5/ would lead to the text. So there followed 21..,K-N1; 22. N-N5, PxP; 23.Q-KB3, and now Black had no adequate defense against the threats of 24.Q-B7/ or 24.Q-KR3. Geller offered his Queen, e.g., 23..,QxN; 24.BxQ, PxP; but two pieces were, of course, not adequate compensation for his Queen, and after some further resistance, Geller resigned.



This game actually decided the out of the match. In the following games, Geller did not put up sufficient strug and was beaten 5½-2½. With this win, Spassky took another important step to s a title match with the World Champion.

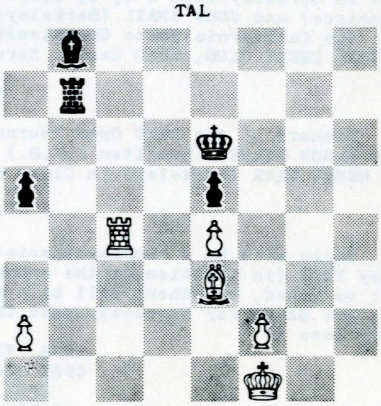
TAL vs. LARSEN

Much more interesting for the public was the semi-final match between Tal and Larsen. Here we had an equal fight, with neither player ever more than a single point ahead at any stage of the match, and only the final game decided the winner of the contest. There were many interesting and hard-fighting games here. If, before the match, many experts were waiting to see an easy win for Tal, then the actual play demonstrated almost the opposite. All through the match Larsen was at least even or leading by a point. Only his loss in the tenth game cost him the match. Larsen showed himself here as a fine fighter, and on this basis both players displayed nearly even strength. In some cases, Larsen even seemed to have the better nerves, which led to better orientation in complicated situations. Where he was clearly inferior was in end-game technique. This, in my opinion, was the deciding factor in the match. He failed to win technically easy endings in Games Four and Nine, and this was too much in such a short match. In any case, Larsen showed himself here as a very talented grandmaster, and if he will improve his end-game play, I am sure he will do much better in the future.

Tal, on the other hand, was not as confident as usual in his natural element -- the complicated positions. Only in Games Six and Ten did he display his real ability, and his win in the latter also meant the win of the match for him. Perhaps Tal was not yet quite physically fit after his operation this last spring.

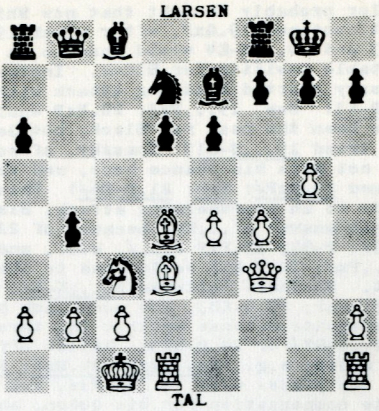
Let us begin with the ending from Game N , which could have had decisive importance on the outcome of the match:

This position occurred after Tal's sealed move (41...P-R4). White not only has an extra Pawn, but his pieces are better posted, and the win should be only a matter of technique. A good normal line here would be 42.P-R4 (to fix Black's R-Pawn on a dark square), followed by a combined attack against it. But Larsen, immediately upon resumption of play, chose a way which led at times to deadly drawish positions, e.g., 42.R-R4, B-B2; 43.K-K2 (even here White could have played 43.R-B4 and 44.P-R4), K-Q2; 44.K-Q3, R-N7; 45.R-R3, B-Q1; and now came the obvious mistake: 46.B-Q2? This permitted Tal the tactical opportunity to force a drawish ending by 46...B-K2! as 47.RxP is met by 47..,RxB/! etc. After 47.R-R4, B-N5, 48.BxB, PxB; the ending becomes a draw, and this was the actual result of the game after 79 moves.



One can see the difference if Larsen had won this most important game! Now everything depended on the outcome of the tenth and final game, which turned out to be a sharp variation of the Sicilian Defense. After 15..,P-N5; the game ar-

rived at the following position:



In attacking the Knight, Larsen was obviously convinced that this piece must now retreat. Therefore, the surprising sacrifice 16.N-Q5! must have been a hard blow for him. It is very difficult to determine whether or not this sacrifice is fully correct, but it does offer excellent attacking possibilities. The sacrifice must, of course, be accepted, and after 16..,PxN; 17.PxP, we arrive at the critical position. Black must defend himself very carefully here. The immediate threat is 18.BxP/, KxB; 19.Q-R5/, K-N1; 20.BxP! KxB; 21.Q-R6/, K-N1; 22.P-N6, etc., with a winning attack, so Black has no great choice in the matter. In the actual game, he played 17..,P-B4; which is probably the best, although 17..,P-N3 is also worthy of consideration. After 18.QR-K1, Larsen continued 18..,R-B2; but here 18..,B-Q1 also looks quite reasonable. The possible variations are too complicated to discuss here, and it is almost impossible to recommend the best continuation. After 19.P-KR4, Larsen's reply 19..,B-N2 does not seem to be the best, as the Bishop is needed for defense on the K-side. Better certainly was 19..,N-B1 or 19..,N-B4. After 20.BxBP, Tal got a second Pawn for his sacrificed piece, with no let-up in his attack, e.g., 20..,RxB; 21.RxB, N-K4. Black now could find nothing better than to return the piece, hoping thereby to weaken White's attack, but it was too late. After 22.Q-K4, Q-KB1; 23.PxN, R-B5; 24.Q-K3, R-B6 (or 24..,RxB; 25.RxB, etc.); 25.Q-K2, QxR; 26.QxR, PxP; 27.R-K1, White retained the better position, and forced the win in a few more moves, e.g., 27..,R-Q1; 28.RxP, Q-Q3; 29.Q-B4, R-KB1; 30.Q-K4, P-N6; 31.PxP, R-B8/; 32.K-Q2, Q-N4/; 33.P-B3, Q-Q3; 34.B-B5, QxB; 35.R-K8/, R-B1; 36.Q-K6/, K-R1; 37.Q-B7, and Black resigned.

A rather disappointing finish for Larsen, but an excellent presentation by the winner.

So now Spassky and Tal, winners of the two original groups, will meet each other in a match in November to decide which of them will be the official F.I.D.E. challenger against World Champion Tigran Petrosian in 1966. Both of these players have achieved many fine games in previous matches, and both have very many excellent tournament results. It is therefore extremely difficult to pick one over the other in the forthcoming final match. If I had to make a choice, I would lean toward Spassky, but this is only my personal opinion. In any case, the contest will undoubtedly produce many interesting games to be enjoyed by chess fans all over the world.

(exclusive to CHESS IN ACTION by International Grandmaster PAUL KERES)

* * *

GARY PICKLER (Danville) won the CFNC State Championship Candidates' Tournament in Berkeley with a $4\frac{1}{2}$-$1\frac{1}{2}$ score in a 7-man round robin. AKI KANAMORI (San Francisco) and JOHN SMAIL (Berkeley) tied for second and third places with 4-2.

The California State Championship Tournament will take place at the HERMAN STEINER CHESS CLUB, 8810 Cashio Street, Los Angeles 35, on December 17/18/19, 1965.

* * *

Winners of the CFNC Open Tournament held at the Berkeley YMCA October 30/31 were MASON KELSEY (Hamilton A.F.B.) in Class A, JAMES JEE (Berkeley) in Class B and HENRY BAER (Berkeley) in Class C.

* * *

There will be a "Sunday Special" Tournament on January 23, 1966, at the Berkeley YMCA (in addition to the annual CFNC Championship event). All participants will be rated, and there will be a prize in each 4-man round robin section. Entry fees are $2.00 for currently-paid CFNC members, $5.00 for non-members. Send all entry fees to:

MRS. VIRGINIA McGINLEY
CFNC Secretary/Treasurer
2763 Chelsea Drive
Oakland, California

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A team from SAN JOSE STATE COLLEGE has just entered the C.F.N.C. Peninsula League.

1966 C.F.N.C. OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT

PLACE: Berkeley YMCA, 2001 Allston Way, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

DATE: Week-end of Saturday and Sunday, January 22/23. Round #1 commences promptly at 12:00 Noon, on Saturday.

REGISTRATION: From 10:00 A.M. until 12:00 Noon (Saturday) at the Berkeley YMCA. For better pairings (and a reduced entry fee!) we recommend that you register prior to January 15, using the entry blank at the bottom of this page (or an equivalent copy).

PRIZES: Trophies will be awarded to the 1st-place winner in each class. Books and other prizes will go to 2nd and 3rd place winners in each division, as well as a number of important "surprise" prizes.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to all chess players who are (or will become) members of CHESS FRIENDS of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA. Membership includes automatic eligibility in all CFNC events, plus four issues of CHESS IN ACTION, the official quarterly publication of CFNC.

TYPE OF TOURNAMENT: 5 rounds, Swiss System, with three classes of play: "Expert/A," "B" and "C." The tournament will be fully rated by CHESS FRIENDS of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

SCHEDULE:

Round 1:	12:00 Noon	-----	3:00 P.M. Saturday
2:	3:30 P.M.		6:30 P.M.
3:	8:30 A.M.		12:30 P.M. Sunday
4:	1:00 P.M.		5:00 P.M.
5:	5:30 P.M.		9:30 P.M.

EQUIPMENT: If possible, bring your own board, chess set and clock.

ENTRY FEE: $5.00 to current CFNC members ($4.00 for entry before January 15) and $8.00 to non-members ($7.00 for entry before January 15).

HOW TO ENTER: Mail entry blank below with your registration fee.

- -

to: Mrs. Virginia McGinley
CFNC Secretary/Treasurer

2763 Chelsea Drive
Oakland, California
94611

PLEASE ENTER ME IN THE 1966 C.F.N.C. OPEN CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP TOURNAMENT

name: _____ phone: _____

street address: _____ city: _____

I am a Class _____ player. (If you are unrated, please indicate so here _____)

Enclosed is $4.00 for CFNC member _____ / $7.00 for non-member _____ (check one)
($5.00 after Jan. 15th) ($8.00 after Jan. 15th)

* * *

After four rounds of the annual SAN BRUNO CHESS CLUB championship tournament, upsets appeared to be the order of the day. At latest report, the leaders were CONNOR SCHROTH (Class A), PRESTON MENDELL (Class B) and HOWARD KLINE (Class C).

In view of the number of surprises so far, however, none of the above can be certain of emerging as champions.

Round Two provided only one surprise, but that one was a genuine "shocker," as Schroth up-ended defending champion KON GRIVAINIS. Round Three provided three more shockers: GRANT METCALF swindled PAUL ZINK from a lost end-game position, Schroth continued his winning ways by upsetting WADE HENDRICKS and Grivainis disposed of usually tough JIM GOUGH with a neatly executed trap. Round Four saw more reversals of form: MARV NEIMAN gave Zink a bad beating, Kline took off LOU KORENS' vest without removing his coat, while, in a head-to-head battle for the Class A lead, Gough could only draw with Schroth.

* * *

CHESS IN ACTION wants to publish club news, tournament announcements, etc., with maximum speed and accuracy.

Correspondents should submit their copy in complete detail and in paragraph form. Game scores are always welcome. Anyone preparing typewritten copy for submission to this magazine should use a fresh ribbon to get clean black characters. Type on white bond paper, with lines not in excess of 8 inches. Copy must be errorless (within reason), without smudges, etc.

This magazine can only be as good as CFNC members care to make it. If you don't like what you see (or cannot find) on these pages, then come up with something better -- games, news, analysis, photos, letters, etc., -- anything pertinent to chess that strikes your fancy, for that matter. Remember to give proper credit where necessary when submitting material.

Our next issue (SPRING, 1966) will appear in February. Deadline for submission of material is January 15, 1966. Send all such material to:

R. P. McClary
125 Irving Street
SAN FRANCISCO (94122)

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HAS YOUR ADDRESS CHANGED?? --- Don't forget to notify our Secretary/Treasurer ----

Mrs. Virginia McGinley

2763 Chelsea Drive

OAKLAND 11, CALIFORNIA

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